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FY 2011 Maricopa Association of Governments
Human Services Coordination Transportation Plan
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Executive Summary

In June 2006, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Council approved taking on the responsibility for developing plans to coordinate human services transportation. Since then, the region's plans have earned national recognition including the 2008 United We Ride National Leadership Award. Per federal requirement as outlined in SAFETEA-LU, each plan contains an inventory of services, a gaps analysis, and prioritized strategies to meet the needs of the region. The goal of every plan is to help people move more easily throughout the region.

The recession has had a dramatic effect on the region's human services transportation programs. Three programs have been eliminated in the past year. Forty percent of remaining programs report funding reductions while demand continues to increase. As agencies strive to remain sustainable, this plan seeks to maximize the services available through coordination. This is proposed through the following strategies:

Priority	Description of Short-Term Strategies for FY 2011	Lead
1.	Implement more programs to serve people with low incomes, particularly in the Southwest Valley.	Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 Agencies
2.	Target travel training to clients of non-profit agencies, including homeless and domestic violence shelters.	Valley Metro
3.	Research and implement van pools to bring domestic violence and homeless shelter clients to work and work preparation activities.	MAG
4.	Develop and offer training on data quality standards for reporting as well as a common set of definitions.	MAG
Priority	Description of Long-Term Strategies	Lead
1.	Establish more taxi cab and mileage reimbursement programs, focusing on areas with less transportation infrastructure.	MAG
2.	Develop a coordinated volunteer drivers program on a regional basis. This will include training for volunteer drivers and the agencies that work with them; and centralizing the information about programs and opportunities online.	MAG

To become involved in these efforts, please contact DeDe Gaisthea at dgaisthea@mag.maricopa.gov or by calling (602) 254-6300. All materials may be accessed at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

Introduction

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Human Services Coordination Transportation Plans are developed to help people move more easily throughout the region. People have a broader array of employment and educational opportunities, more efficient access to medical care, and a better quality of life when they have reliable transportation. Through coordination, transportation can be accessed more effectively for those most vulnerable in the region, including older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Securing transportation can be a difficult experience if a person has to overcome limitations caused by age, mobility and/or limited financial resources. In addition, the downturn in the economy has forced the closure of some transportation services while making other programs less available. Now more than ever, people are finding it harder to get to the jobs that will sustain their families.

Regional coordination plans are developed in response to SAFETEA-LU federal legislation requiring applicants of three federal funding sources to comply with a locally derived plan. This region has achieved great success through the MAG coordination plans. In March 2009, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Human Services Transportation Planning Program won the 2008 United We Ride Leadership Award in the category of major urbanized areas. The award was bestowed for successfully implementing plans to coordinate human services transportation.

Partnerships with the Arizona Department of Transportation, the City of Phoenix, and the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust have contributed to the success of the plans. The coordination plans benefit greatly by the many stakeholders throughout the region who have been essential in the development and implementation of the goals in each plan.

This plan will report on the progress made on the strategies from the FY 2010 plan, offer an assessment of gaps within the region, provide a highlight of successful coordination efforts in the community, and propose new strategies to address the gaps. These strategies will focus on the maximization of available resources in the community. Offering short-term and long-term strategies will help to ensure the sustainability of coordination efforts for years to come.

Progress on the FY 2010 Plan Update

The strategies developed in the FY 2010 Plan Update focused on promoting the United We Ride goals of providing more rides for the targeted populations for the same or fewer resources by maximizing the capacity of the current system. The four strategies strived to promote the activities that would have the most positive impact on human services transportation in the region. Progress made on the goals is as follows:

Shared Vehicles

Outcome measure:

To continue the implementation of the United We Ride goals, this strategy focused on maximizing resources and reducing unused capacity by rewarding Section 5310

applicants who request shared vehicles. A coordinated effort among agencies is essential to meet the demands of an increasing population. Recognizing partnerships between agencies for shared vehicles provides an incentive to put into action further collaborative efforts. MAG, along with Arizona Department of Transportation and the City of Phoenix, monitored requests of agencies that partner their efforts through the application processes for Section 5310, 5316 and 5317.

Progress:

During the application process, all review panels took into consideration requests of agencies for shared vehicles during the scoring process by rewarding agencies who requested shared vehicles. No impact has been seen this year since no agencies have requested shared vehicles. Recognizing partnerships between agencies for shared vehicles will continue to be taken into consideration in the application process. Insurance has been identified as a critical barrier. Solutions are being researched.

Travel Training Inventory

Outcome measure:

The goal of this strategy was to complete an inventory of agency travel training programs in the region. The inventory will lead to a better understanding of the availability of programs, better coordination, and development of new programs to fill gaps in service. The inventory will provide information on agencies that can offer, or would be willing to offer travel training to others outside of their agency.

Progress:

MAG and Valley Metro developed a travel training inventory survey that has been forwarded and distributed to human services transportation providers. Survey results have been received and forwarded to Valley Metro. Valley Metro is in the process of identifying additional means to collect information, continue to collect results, and analyzing the data for gaps in travel training programs in the region.

Match Mechanism

Outcome measure:

Develop a mechanism for matching agencies with the capacity to offer more trips with agencies needing transportation for their clients as well as people in need from the community. This strategy helped to maximize available resources meet the increasing demand for services. Determining capacity meets the United We Ride goal of providing more rides for the same or fewer resources.

Progress:

MAG surveyed human services transportation providers inquiring if they are currently, or would consider, transporting people who are not their clients. The information received indicated a number of the agencies would consider transporting people outside their clientele. The data was provided to Community Information and Referral, a twenty-four

hour hotline that provides human services information to the public. The information is currently being used as an additional resource given to people calling for assistance.

United We Ride Goal Consistency

Outcome measure:

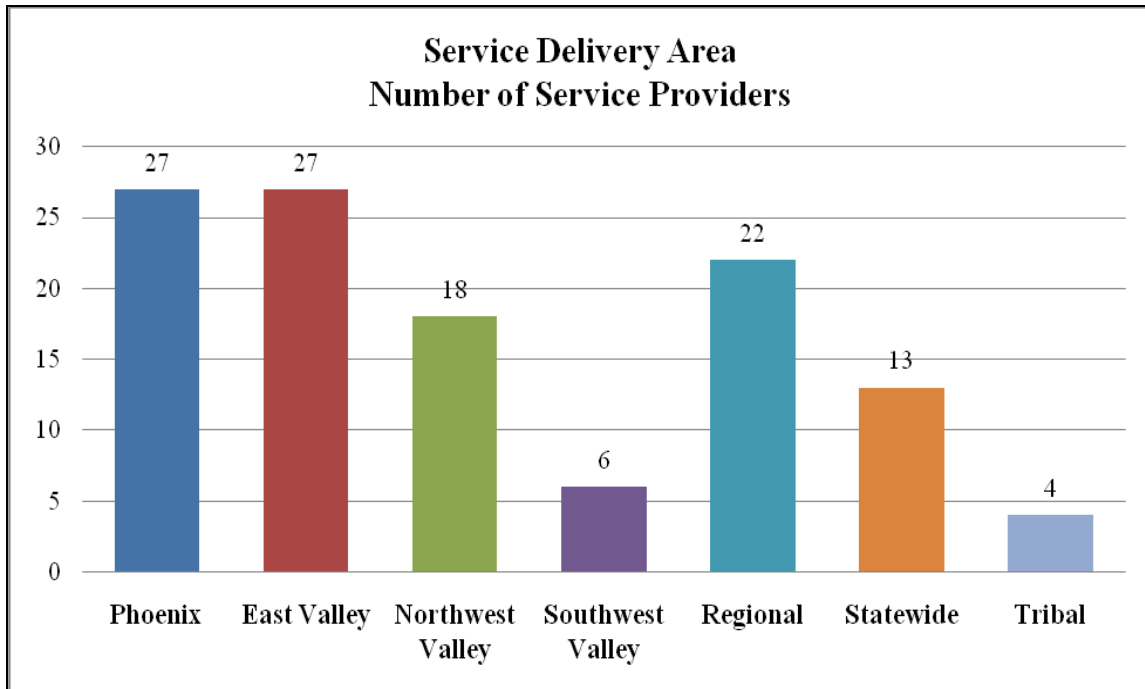
This strategy encouraged and awarded applicants that have supported the development and implementation of the coordination plans. This is evident by an agency's inclusion in the plan update Participant List, as well projects that promote the United We Ride goals to improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality. By participating in the implementation of the plans, agencies strengthen human services transportation coordination efforts in the region. MAG, along with Arizona Department of Transportation and the City of Phoenix, monitors applicant's participation and implementation efforts through the application processes for Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317.

Progress:

MAG has tracked grantee participation of activities associated with the planning process such as meeting attendance and compliance with data requests. The information of agencies' participation has been forwarded to ADOT and the City of Phoenix for use with their application review process. Grantees and potential grantees have added to the success of implementation strategies in the region such as the MAG Transportation Ambassador Program while providing valuable feedback on the development of future coordination plan.

Gaps Analysis

Human services transportation services are under considerable stress due to budget reductions, increased demand, and cost shifting. As agencies close or services cease, people turn to existing resources and the strain on services multiplies. The impact of the recession in the region cannot be overstated. These times are unprecedented and the affect on human services transportation have been dramatic. Last year's gaps analysis indicated the area of largest need was people with low incomes in the Southwest Valley. While this remains true, the recession has put all programs for all populations at risk.



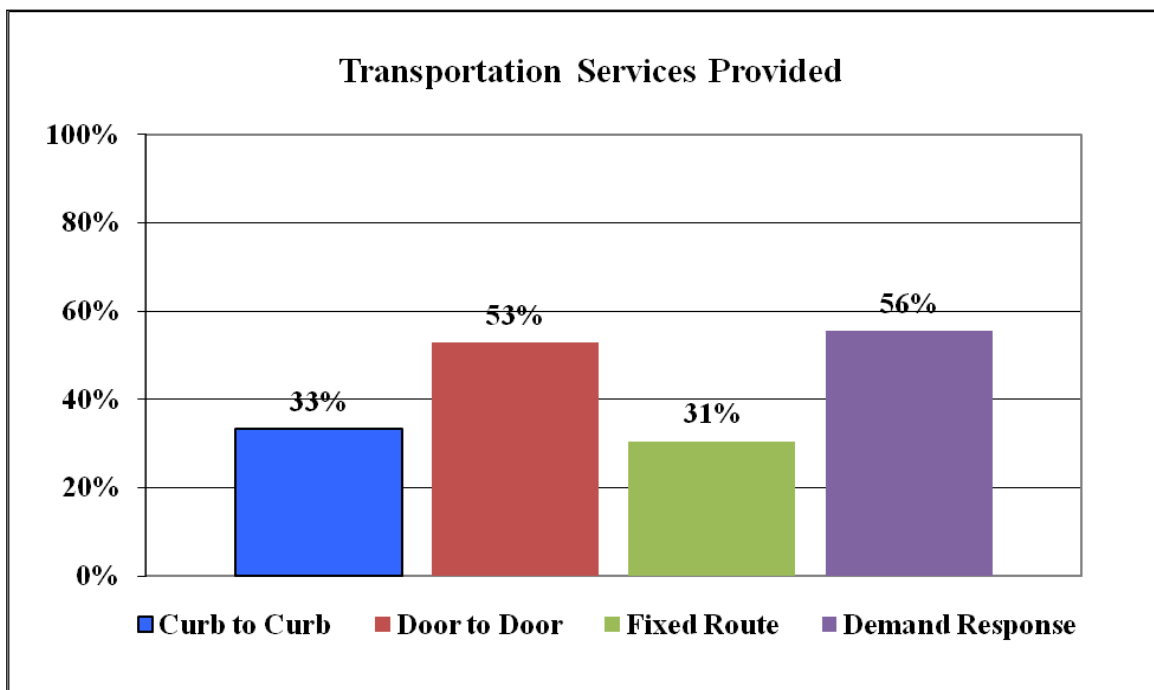
Population variances are seen throughout the region. It is estimated 9 percent of the population is living below the poverty level, 16 percent are persons with a disability and 15 percent are older adults. The City of Phoenix has the highest percentage of persons living below the poverty level at 10 percent. They also have the largest number of service providers as indicated in the chart. The Southwest Valley is estimated at 8 percent for persons living below the poverty level with the fewest services provided. Other areas of the region indicate a high percentage of the targeted population. In the Northwest Valley the population of persons with disabilities is higher than the regional average at 18 percent and older adults are reported higher in the Northeast Valley at 23 percent.

While a majority of the vulnerable population is reported in the outlying areas of the region, transportation options servicing those areas are often limited. Limitations such as few transit routes servicing outlying areas, service wait time of an hour or more and limited weekend services often make seeking alternate transportation options difficult at best. Dial-A-Ride services, while available, also have limited coverage in the East and West Valley. For example, the Southwest Valley Dial-A-Ride service area covers most of Litchfield Park and Tolleson but a little more than half of Avondale and a small portion of Goodyear. The East Valley Dial-A-Ride covers areas in Gilbert, Mesa and Tempe, with limited services in Chandler and Scottsdale.

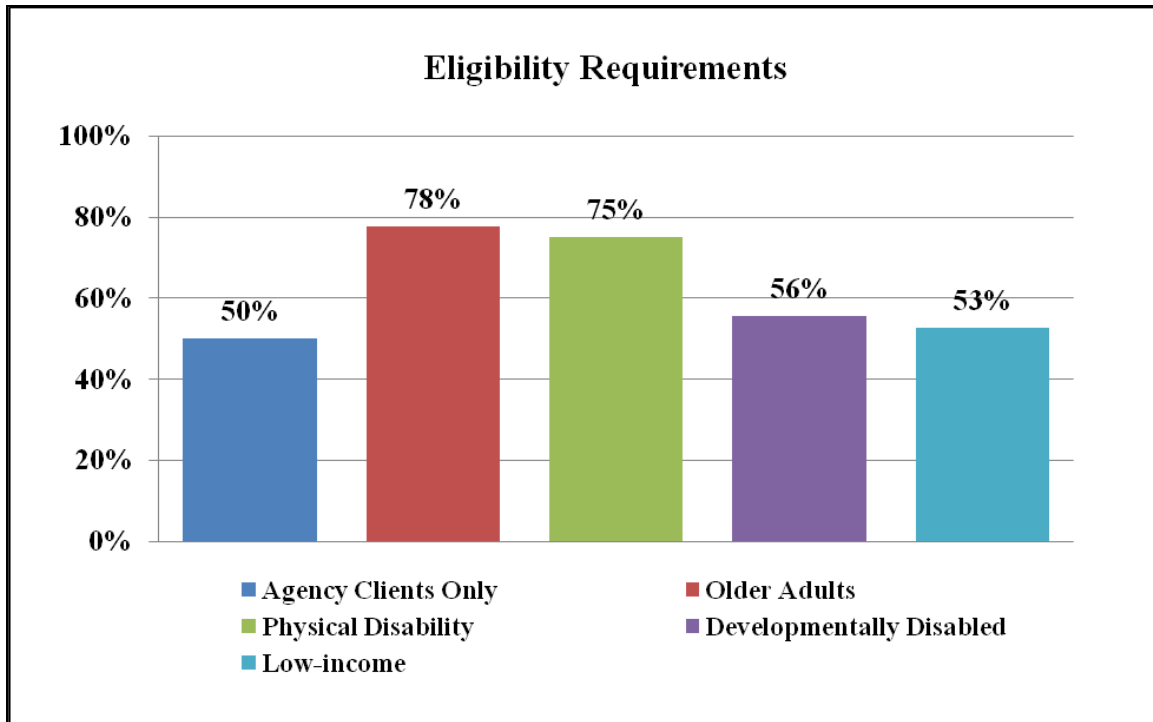
The biggest change to human services transportation in the region is the closure of the only free regional system. In July 2009, the Maricopa County Special Transportation Services (STS) terminated services due to lack of funding. At its peak, the service provided 30,000 trips a year of the most vulnerable in the population, including older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income workers. Some of the people hardest hit by the closure of STS are in unincorporated areas such as the Sun Lakes retirement community south of Chandler, Fountain Hills and the West Valley.

The closure of STS has highlighted the impact each service provider has on the region. In August 2009, MAG conducted a Human Services Transportation Provider Inventory survey. The survey was forwarded to 120 human services transportation providers that included nonprofits, public agencies, municipalities and senior communities. Analysis of the results provided information on the types of the services agencies bring to the region, how services are affected by the economy, and what changes are being implemented to meet the demand.

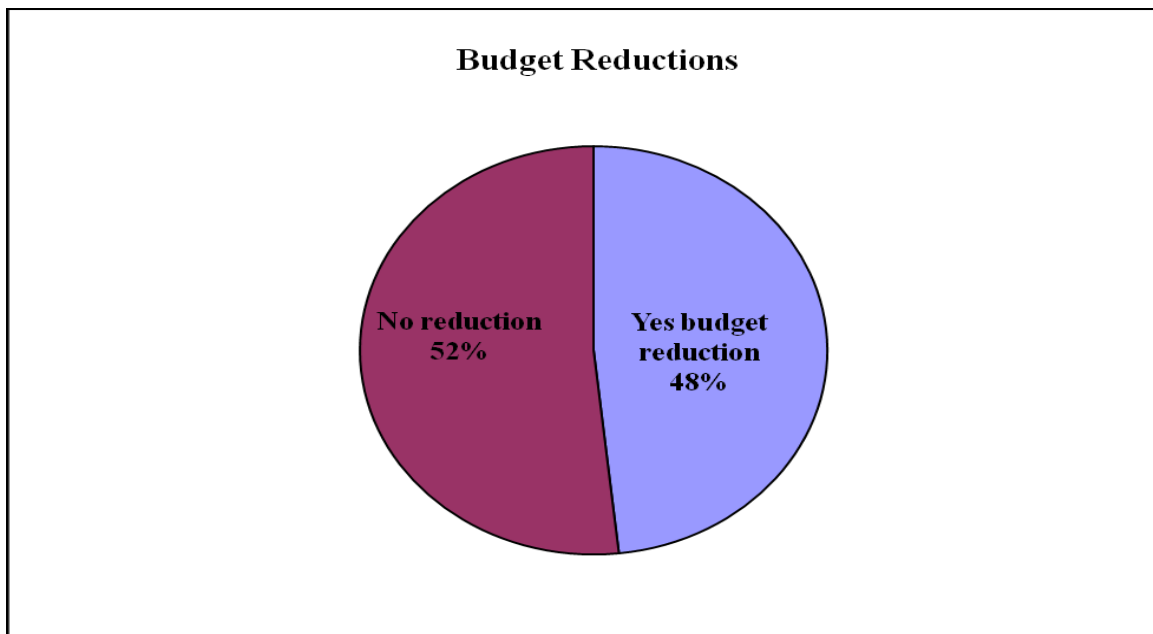
The types of services and modes of transportation vary from agency to agency with most offering a combination of services. Agencies reported the most frequent types of services offered were demand response and door-to-door at 56 and 53 percent respectively. Curb-to-curb was next at 33 percent and fixed route services at 31 percent. Vans were most often cited as the mode of transportation provided by agencies at 64 percent. Eighty-eight of the vans were ADA accessible. Other types of transportation provided were a combination of transit vouchers, mileage reimbursements, personal vehicles and trolley services.



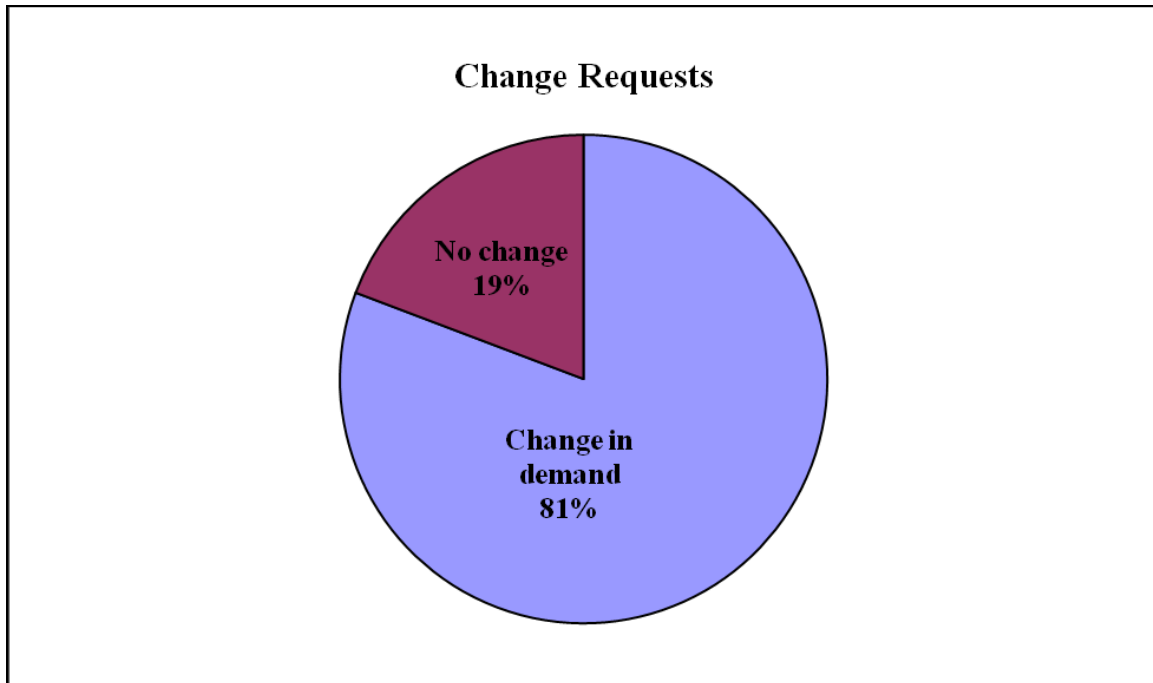
The inventory indicates older adults receive the most service at 78 percent. The age requirement for consumers varied from agency to agency ranging between the ages of 55 to 65 years. Seventy-five percent of the agencies surveyed assist persons with disabilities. People with low incomes receive the least service at 53 percent.



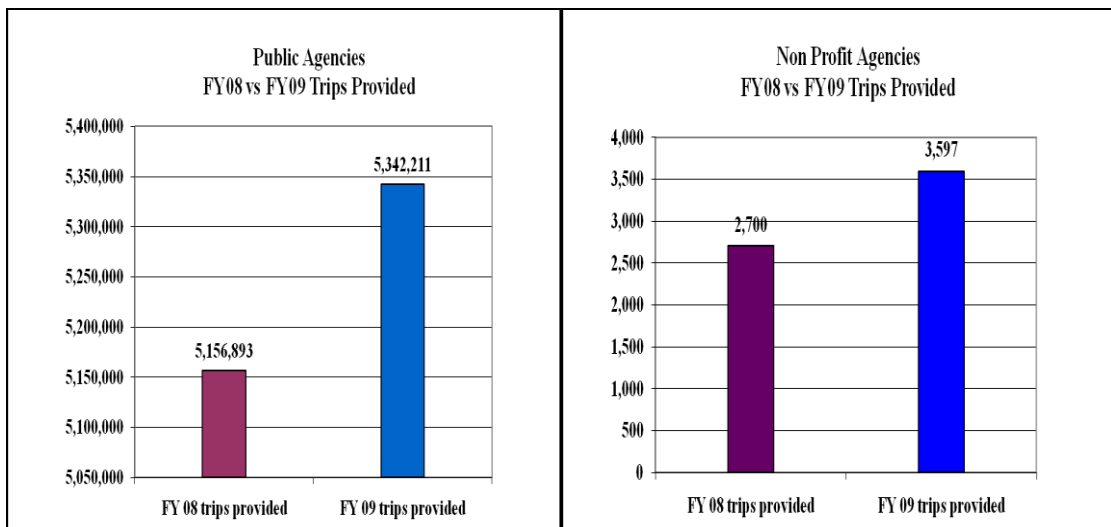
Inventory results indicated 48 percent of surveyed agencies experienced some reduction of funding for FY 09. With additional budget cuts projected at the state level, more agencies will likely experience funding reductions in the near future.



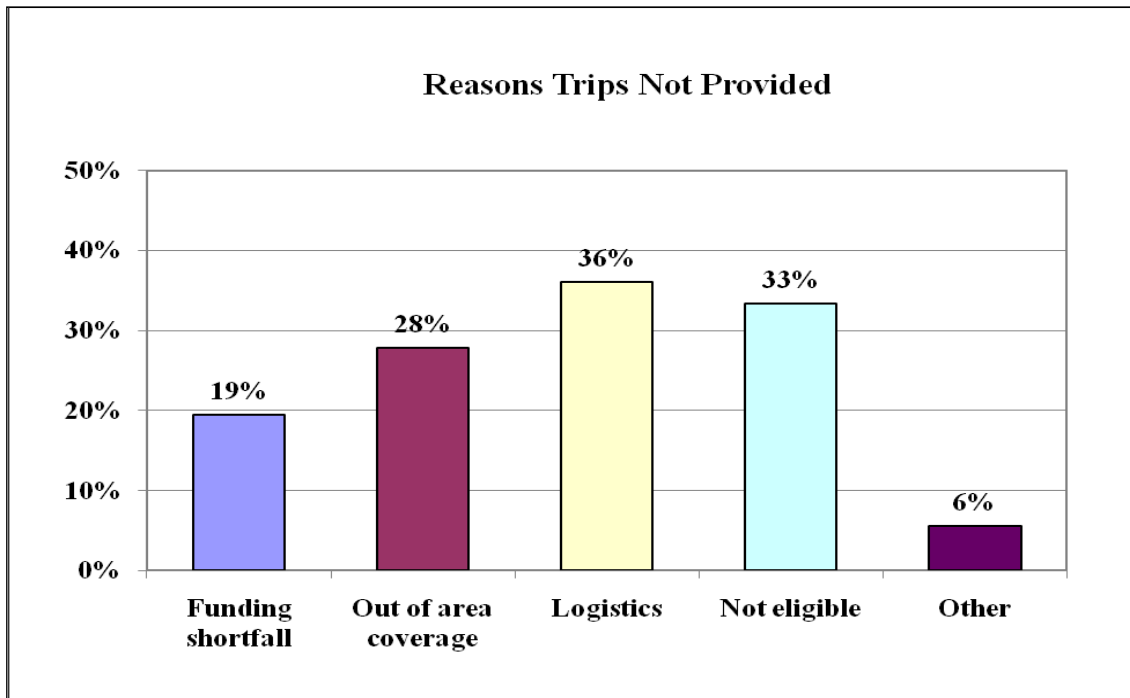
While agency funding is decreasing, the demand for services is not. Respondents indicated an 81 percent increase in demand for all services provided in FY 09. Increases for services ranged from five percent to a 50 percent increase.



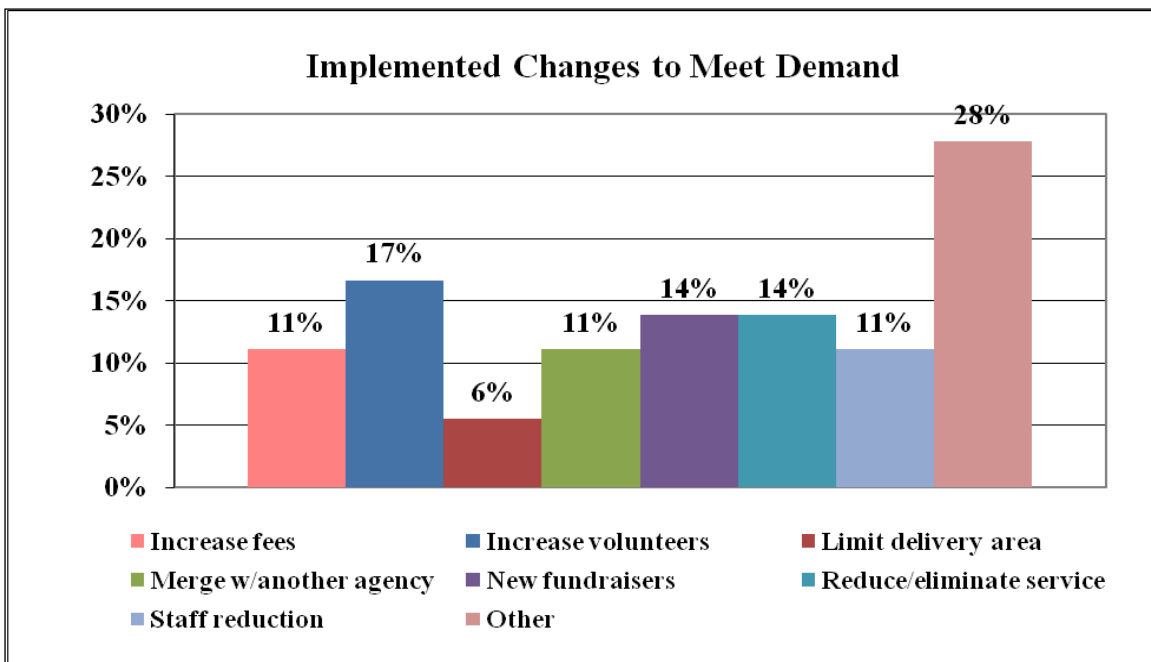
Inventory results show the number of trips provided by public transit agencies increased by an additional 200,000 trips from FY 08 to FY 09. Nonprofit agencies indicated an increase of 14,346 more trips provided during the same time period.



Despite these increases, not all requests for service could be fulfilled. The number one response at 36 percent was logistics, such as not having enough drivers or vans available. The next two highest responses reported were consumers were not eligible for services or requests were out of the service delivery area.



Agencies are finding alternative ways to adjust to budget reductions in an effort to sustain their programs. Increasing volunteers was ranked second with developing new fundraisers and reducing or eliminating services tied at third highest response. The number one response indicated looking at other options. Items included in the “Other” category included increasing service fees, eliminating services, and staff reductions. Agencies indicated searching for grants for taxi service and exploring alternative options such as taxi voucher and mileage reimbursement programs. Others were furloughing staffing hours by ten percent, looking for ways to reduce overall expenses, and adjusting staff salary scale. Agencies are also having their clients utilize more public transit services.



While many agencies rely on federal funding, others find the application terminology and data collection a challenge to understand and collect. Reporting can be an issue for agencies who are concentrating on multiple issues due to limited funding and immediate requests from their clients.

With funding becoming more limited, many agencies are now finding it more difficult to provide a match for grants. The number of Section 5310 grant applications has declined from 22 applicants in FY 2006 to 13 applicants in FY 2009. The number of human services transportation programs has declined from 120 in the FY 2010 Plan to 117 agencies in the current inventory. The closure of nonprofit programs can lead to a strain on municipalities as they attempt to provide the services needed by their residents.

Municipalities are also reporting on the affect of limited funding for human services transportation programs. Public transit services across the region are being reduced due to limited funding. The use of alternative transportation options is being discussed such as developing mileage reimbursement programs and cab voucher programs. These options are also being promoted nationally. The Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation) Survey on the Use of Taxis in Paratransit Programs is one example.

Seeking new opportunities such as partnerships with homeless and domestic violence shelter would reach a population who are in need of transportation services. The need can be seen in the numbers of calls received in the 2009 Community Information and Referral CONTACS monthly report under the category “Transportation for Endangered People”. Sixty-five single individuals and 21 families called CONTACS for transportation assistance in one month.

Highlight on Useful Coordination Practice

On June 7, 2009 the MAG Transportation Ambassador Program presented the 2009 Regional of Excellence of Coordination awards. The awards recognized the organization and overall champion who displayed tireless commitment through their work in human services transportation coordination efforts. Judges for the awards were Dave Cyra, National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination; Ellen Solowey, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; and Page Gonzales, Governor Brewer’s Office. The awardees have increased access to transportation for older adults, persons with disabilities, and people with low incomes in their community.

Regional Excellence in Coordination Nonprofit Organization: Neighbors Who Care, Inc. Neighbors Who Care, Inc (NWC) serves the needs of the homebound elderly in Sun Lakes and south Chandler by providing a menu of nine support services to 700 seniors in a 32 square mile service area. The most popular services provided are transportation services. Ninety percent of people served use transportation services for rides to medical appointments, necessary shopping/errands, and trips for groceries. Services are provided by a core group of 600 community volunteers who have provided more than 2,950 rides to medical appointments and 460 rides for shopping/errands in their personal vehicles

during FY 2008-2009. Volunteers also drive the Neighborhoods Who Care grocery van which provides another 730 rides during this same timeframe.

NWC has implemented changes to improve services for clients such as adding an access ramp for the van. They sought investments from local foundations and service clubs to launch a mileage reimbursement program for volunteers providing transportation using their private vehicles. NWC adjusted the duties of staffing and office volunteers to aid families and clients in verifying and managing appointments for those with dementia and/or hearing and vision loss. NWC has an impressive record of volunteer coordination to provide transportation services to the community.

Regional Excellence in Coordination Overall Champion: Gary Bretz, Valley Metro

Gary Bretz, Valley Metro, has effectively managed the East Valley Dial-a-Ride services for the past 11 years. In this role, Mr. Bretz identifies ways to improve transportation alternatives for seniors and persons with disabilities. Mr. Bretz played a significant role in combining the two East Valley dial-a-rides, Tempe/Scottsdale and the Mesa/Chandler Dial-a-Rides. He is also one of the key leaders in expanding the East Valley Ride Choice program into the West Valley.

Mr. Bretz has been instrumental in providing direct service from the East Valley to the Center for the Blind. Mr. Bretz's vast knowledge regarding ADA services makes him an invaluable resource.

Strategies to Address Gaps

Human service transportation is a critical service that includes a broad range of transportation service options. The services are designed to meet the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations. Individuals have different needs and may require different sets services depending on their abilities, their environment, and options available in their community. Examples may include paratransit or dial-a-ride (responding to individual door-to-door transportation requests), transit passes for fixed route scheduled services, accessing taxi vouchers; and mileage reimbursement to volunteers or program participants. Challenges facing the region are how to continue providing transportation services with less funding available while demand steadily increasing.

Crisis provides opportunities to explore. Throughout the region, people are developing innovative solutions to resolve these gaps and make transportation accessible to all. Champions in the community have taken up the cause of providing transportation options to the most vulnerable. Agencies are discussing innovative opportunities for the collaboration of services. To overcome the challenges of a growing population increasing demands on programs already at their limit, it is crucial to identify and coordinate the resources that are already in place.

The following strategies strive to promote the activities that will have the most positive impact on human services transportation in this region. The new strategies identified for the plan update this year focuses on the coordination of available resources in our

community. Offering short-term and long-term strategies will help to ensure the sustainability of coordination efforts in the region. The new strategies proposed for the FY 2011 Plan include the following:

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Conclusion

This region is among those most affected by the recession, yet this region has also been recognized nationally for the most success in coordinating human services transportation. While funding may be uncertain, the commitment to help people move more easily throughout the region is steadfast. By implementing the new strategies and cultivating new partnerships, the region can see significant benefits from coordination.

To become involved in these efforts, please contact DeDe Gaisthea at dgaisthea@mag.maricopa.gov or by calling (602) 254-6300. All materials may be accessed at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

ATTACHMENTS

Resource Inventory

The following is a list of agencies that provide human services transportation. Please contact DeDe Gaisthea, MAG Human Services Transportation Planner, at dgaisthea@mag.maricopa.gov with any questions or changes.

PLEASE REFER TO ATACHED EXCEL SPREADSHEET

Background

United We Ride – A National Initiative

United We Ride implements the Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination (#13330) issued by President Bush in February 2004. United We Ride is a national initiative to enhance human service transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, children, and individuals with lower income. United We Ride offers state and local agencies support with technical assistance and other resources to aid with transportation coordination. The Executive Order requires eleven Federal departments to work together to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of Federal services, and facilitate the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. More information on United We Ride can be found at the following link, <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>.

Explanation of Affected Funding Sources

SAFETEA-LU

On August 10, 2005 President Bush signed into law the Save Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The federal transit law requires projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities program, as well as the Section 5316, Job Access and Reverse Commute program and Section 5317, New Freedom program be derived from a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The coordination plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

SAFETEA-LU federal legislation expired on September 30, 2009. President Obama on October 1, 2009, signed legislation that provided a one month extension for the continuation of SAFETEA-LU. Before the one month extension expired, Congress passed a continuing resolution for continuation until December 18, 2009. The next step is for lawmakers to reach an agreement on a comprehensive reauthorization or to have further continuing resolutions for SAFETEA-LU. For more information please go to this link, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/>.

Section 5310

The Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities or Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program. This program provides formula funding to States for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of population for these groups of people.

Funds are obligated based on the annual program of projects included in a statewide grant application. The State agency ensures that local applicants and project activities are eligible and in compliance with Federal requirements, that private not-for-profit transportation providers have an opportunity to participate as feasible, and that the program provides for as much coordination of federally assisted transportation services, assisted by other Federal sources. Once FTA approves the application, funds are available for state administration of its program and for allocation to individual subrecipients within the state.

The Federal Transit Administration provides ADOT in excess of \$3.9 million in formula FTA and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds annually through the capital assistance program. While the standard matching rate historically has been 80 percent federal and 20 percent local, ADOT may use higher federal rates at its discretion. Program funds are used annually primarily for capital assistance, for the purchase of over 120 van type vehicles and related equipment statewide. In addition, a new federal class of grant called "mobility management" is available to assist agencies and communities with their coordination efforts.

Eligible recipients include private non-profit and public agencies that provide transportation to the elderly and disabled. The utilization of special transportation includes medical appointments, adult day care facilities Education and Employment Training Nutrition and Service Appointments such as Social Services Shopping Trips. For more information please go to this link,

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3556.html.

Section 5316

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Many new entry-level jobs are located in suburban areas, and low-income individuals have difficulty accessing these jobs from their inner city, urban, or rural neighborhoods. In addition, many entry level-jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment related-trips are complex and involve multiple destinations including reaching childcare facilities or other services.

The JARC program funds transportation projects designed to help low-income individuals access to employment and related activities where existing transit is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient. The JARC program also funds reverse commute transit services available to the general public. As designated by the Governor of the State of Arizona, MPD administers JARC funds for rural and small urbanized areas of the state (population under 200,000) including rural Pima and Maricopa Counties, and the City of Avondale. Available funding is contingent upon Congressional resolutions regarding all programs' budgets. For more information on Section 5316 please go to, http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3550.html.

Section 5317

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed.

The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. To encourage services and facility improvements to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information please go to,

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3549.html.

Roles

Maricopa Association of Governments

In June 2006, the MAG Regional Council approved MAG to develop the coordination plans in response to the SAFETEA-LU regulations. Since this initial work, MAG has developed and supported the implementation of three plans prior to the current update. The first plan in 2007 focused on establishing a good communication foundation to augment more intensive strategies to come in the future. The second plan, released in 2008, promoted strategies to help standardize operations, thus putting agencies in a better position to coordinate with each other. The third plan integrated the goals of the United We Ride goals of providing more rides for the targeted populations for the same or fewer resources (efficiency) by maximizing the capacity of the current system. The plans may be accessed at the following link, <http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/detail.cms?item=8111>.

In addition to developing the coordination plans, MAG facilitates the Section 5310 application process for the region. The MAG Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program Committee evaluate the applicants and develop a priority listing of projects. Once the MAG Regional Council has taken action, the list is forwarded to ADOT.

Arizona Department of Transportation

Successful applications for the grant program are initially forwarded through a regional application evaluation and screening process, which includes ADOT and non-ADOT transportation and human service professionals. The 5310 Program utilizes the assistance of COG (Council of Government) and MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) planning offices to screen applicants within the state's nine planning regions. ADOT then makes the final decision regarding awards based on this input and available budget.

ADOT has worked to promote coordination of human service and public transportation statewide through the Governor's *Arizona Rides* initiative and Executive Order – itself an outgrowth of the federal United We Ride Executive Order and Program. The Governor's Executive Order formally ended in December 2008. However, through Section 5310 and

its companion programs, the ADOT Multimodal Planning Division continues its support of coordination as a key program cross-cutting element to reflect the Federal emphasis. For further information please go to this link, <http://www.azdot.gov/>.

City of Phoenix

The City of Phoenix is a critical partner in the coordination planning process. Historically, it has been the designated recipient for JARC funding for the urban areas in the region. When New Freedom funding became available, Governor Napolitano appointed the City to become the designated recipient for this new funding source as well. The City has combined their evaluation process for urban Section 5316 and 5317 with the rural applications on behalf of ADOT. A Phoenix representative also serves on the MAG committee that evaluates the Section 5310 applications. This helps to ensure a seamless working relationship and good collaboration among all three funding sources and partners.

The City of Phoenix also provides funding to support staffing for the coordination planning process. In addition, Phoenix staff is an active partner to develop and implement the coordination plans. Their participation provides a staunch base of support that ensures the plans may be implemented quickly and effectively. For further information on the City of Phoenix grant application process please go to this link, <http://phoenix.gov/publictransit/grants.html>.